

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

The Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TAXATION AND IRS
OVERSIGHT

The Subcommittee on Taxation and IRS Oversight of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PROMOTING MINORITY HEALTH
AWARENESS AND SUPPORTING
THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NA-
TIONAL MINORITY HEALTH
MONTH IN APRIL 2021

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, if I could say, this is kind of like the old days, with you up there.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 205, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 205) promoting minority health awareness and supporting the goals and ideals of National Minority Health Month in April 2021, which include bringing attention to the health disparities faced by minority populations of the United States such as American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BROWN. I know of no further debate on the measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If there is no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 205) was agreed to.

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION
OF THE WEEK OF APRIL 18
THROUGH APRIL 24, 2021, AS NA-
TIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS
WEEK

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 206, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 206) supporting the designation of the week of April 18 through April 24, 2021, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The resolution (S. Res. 206) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 12,
2021.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Wednesday, May 12; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the motion to discharge the nomination of Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services from the Finance Committee; that at 12 noon all time be considered expired and the Senate vote on the motion to discharge the Brooks-LaSure nomination; that the cloture motions filed during yesterday's session of the Senate ripen following disposition of the motion to discharge; further, that if cloture is invoked on Executive Calendar No. 108,

Ronald Stroman, all postcloture time be considered expired at 3:30 p.m.; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator INHOFE of Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

ALLIES AND PARTNERS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, Winston Churchill famously said: "There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them."

Republicans and Democrats agree: Strong alliances and partnerships are key to the asymmetric advantage that the United States has over our strategic competitors.

Like every President before him, President Biden has rightly made America's alliances and partnerships a cornerstone of his administration. It is a national security policy.

Alliances and partnerships are not a substitute for a strong American military. A strong military is the foundation of our alliances. Military power creates leverage and credibility for our diplomats, and just as importantly, it creates a deterrent.

Real deterrence cannot be achieved unless it is credible, and it cannot be credible unless we properly fund our military and have our allies and partners with us. It has to be both. You can't have one or the other. Why? Because our partnerships are two-way streets. Alliances aren't just for show. They are not just empty statements that we are blindly sending money to support vague goals. These relationships are built on mutual interests. They benefit us just as much as they benefit other countries. Look at the billions of dollars that some of our allies have contributed to U.S. bases in their countries.

"National Defense Strategy"—this book is the one that was put together in 2018. It was put together by 12 people, 6 Republicans and 6 Democrats, all experts in their field. In fact, one of them just this morning was in a committee hearing before our committee. This document has been our blueprint for a long period of time, so this is what we have, and this is what we feel is going to be something that will stay with us for a long time.

In this book, it states that—and I am quoting from it now—"mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are

crucial to our strategy, providing a durable, asymmetric strategic advantage that no competitor or rival can match.” But maintaining that asymmetrical advantage requires much more than simply saying nice things about our allies and partners.

The bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission report, written by six Democrats and six Republicans, makes this very clear. They talk about how “these alliances and partnerships . . . have ultimately rested on a foundation of military strength.” So when President Biden says that “America’s alliances are our greatest asset” and then goes to underfund the military, it defies common sense. Underfunding the military threatens that very foundation that underwrites the effectiveness of our alliances and partnerships.

Let me explain a little bit of how it works. We will start with nuclear modernization.

The United States maintains a safe and effective nuclear arsenal to protect American families but also to protect our partners and allies. Our nuclear umbrella has three benefits.

First, it makes clear to China and Russia which countries stand with us. You know, they don’t know otherwise, and they have a terrible practice of lying about which countries are with us or are with them. So this makes it very clear. It is on the dotted line.

Second, it has the benefit of giving those countries the security of relying on our deterrence rather than feeling like they have to develop their own nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, our umbrella of extended nuclear deterrence is a pillar of our goal of global nuclear nonproliferation. If we cut back our own nuclear deterrent and take away that umbrella, which is what would happen if we reduce our defense budget, it is likely that nuclear weapons will become more common, not less.

President Biden has said nuclear nonproliferation is one of his priorities. Do you see the disconnect here? That is why it is so concerning to me that some administration officials—now I am talking about the current administration—some of those officials are talking about drastically reducing our nuclear modernization efforts.

I am also concerned that some in the administration and in Congress are targeting our fifth-generation stealth air power. Don’t get me wrong—the F-35 has had its problems. We all understand that. But it is the cornerstone of our ability to operate with allies and our partners.

The F-35 program—that is our program—has 21 allies and partners in it. For many, it is their main capability and will be their primary contribution to any kind of a high-end problem that should come forward. When we talk about cutting the program or moving away from it, their governments question our commitment. There is no substitute aircraft or capability for these countries. We want our allies and part-

ners to fight along with us; there is no question about that.

Let’s remember what happened. First of all, the F-35 is a fifth-generation vehicle, and we only had one other one, and that was the F-22. I remember so well, just a few years ago, at that time we were going to have 700 F-22 aircraft, but we only ended up with 187 of them because at the last minute, they were talking like they are talking today, a lot of people in the administration, saying maybe we don’t need to have as many F-35s. Well, we absolutely do need to have them. We don’t want to make the same mistake now that we made several years ago with the F-22.

Our combatant commanders have already told us that we will be outnumbered in terms of stealth fighters in the western Pacific by 2025, and it will be even worse if American F-35 cuts lead—because you know that other countries, like our allies in Australia and Japan, they would be cutting theirs if we cut ours.

That is just one of the many serious problems we have in the Indo-Pacific.

Our partners and allies are worried about U.S. force posture and our ability to deter and, if necessary, defeat China’s use of military force. I heard that for myself way back in 2018 when I was in that area of the South China Sea. Many of our allies and partners in that region—they were clear. They saw firsthand how China was preparing to swiftly defeat our forces in the Pacific. They were trying to figure out how—if we would be there for them when that happened or if they would be needing to start cozying up to China. They are not going to sit around and wait for us to perform. They are going to have to know that we are going to be there for them.

Our competition out there in that area is clearly China. We know what they are doing, we know what their plans are, and we are concerned about it. Fortunately, our significant investment in the military under President Trump was an encouraging sign to our allies and partners. They were all very proud of us. But after watching China’s Communist Party dismantle democracy in Hong Kong and commit genocide on the Uighurs in northwest China, our partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific are now worried that China will try to invade and annex Taiwan. How many years have we been talking about that? Now they are really concerned about it.

General McMaster testified that Taiwan is “the most significant flashpoint that could lead to large scale war,” saying that China would take military action against Taiwan as soon as 2022. The former and current commanders of INDOPACOM both emphasized the near-term threat. It is a real threat. It is out there.

This is the primary reason why the Armed Services Committee with overwhelmingly bipartisan support has put in place our Pacific Deterrent Initiative. We call it the PDI. The PDI is in-

tended to bolster our degraded force posture in the Indo-Pacific to counter China’s military buildup. We have to restore the favorable balance of power in the region where the problem is the most acute, and that is west of the international date line, where our partners and allies are most immediately threatened by Chinese aggression.

PDI is fundamentally about building basic infrastructure so that we can operate with our allies and partners. It will mean more distributed and smaller bases, maybe hardened communications, as well as increased and more realistic exercises with allies and partners.

If we want PDI to succeed, we need to resource it properly. Both Admirals Davidson and Aquilino told the Armed Services Committee that much just last week in a hearing we had in our committee.

After the hollow promises of the Obama administration to “Pivot to the Pacific” and after almost no change in the U.S. military posture in the region over the last two decades, our partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific are worried, and justly so. They want to see sustained investment matching sustained commitments, especially after President Trump rightfully pushed them to step up their own investments. They answered the call. But President Biden will create a credibility problem if we don’t continue to invest as well. We want them to do that. This is the case. We are going to have to get this done.

Our INDOPACOM allies and partners throughout that region are watching closely to see what we do with the defense budget top line and with PDI. What they see is that President Biden’s defense budget does not even keep up with inflation. We are talking about the defense budget that he came out with just a couple of weeks ago. That actually had a reduction. It didn’t even beat inflation at that time and didn’t come close to what was really recommended by this document that we are supposed to be using—it is a bipartisan document—let alone matching the real growth we need to implement the National Defense Strategy.

So over in Europe, Biden proclaimed, “America is back,” and that sounds good, claiming a reversal from the previous administration. It is just not true. Again, actions are not matching words. Rhetoric without resources will devastate our credibility and undermine our alliances here too.

If defense cuts impact the European Deterrence Initiative, it will serve to weaken our European posture and make our allies and partners more susceptible to Russian aggression. Without a strong defense budget, the Biden administration’s goal and pledge to support NATO and deter Russia will ring hollow for our European allies and partners.

Sharing the burden is a key benefit of our international alliances and partnerships, but our NATO alliances

might see the administration's military reductions as a signal that they no longer need to meet their commitments to spend 2 percent of their GDP. Now, remember when the previous President, President Trump, talked to our allies to start belying up and participating. NATO—those nations are our friends, but they are not coming to the level that they are going to have to do to carry their end of it.

Don't forget—whether we are facing Russia, China, or other adversaries in other parts of the world, operating jointly with our allies and partners is a core part of our ability to deter conflict in multiple theaters, but it requires investment.

Take the refueling support we provided for our French allies in Mali—6 million pounds of fuel to allow the French to take on that critical counterterrorism mission and support their troops on the ground. It would have cost us billions to do this mission by ourselves. That is why we need the allies. The same goes for Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, and elsewhere. A good portion of our defense budget pays for our military to support our allies and partners so that we don't have to send our own troops over there and our allies can do it for us. It gives us insight into its operations.

So do you see what would happen if our military's ability to posture forward and stay ready is choked by inadequate defense spending? Our allies and partners would suffer, not improve, and the United States would end up spending more money for less security. This goes directly against the Biden administration's stated goals.

Thinking that alliances and partnerships can substitute for U.S. military capability and capacity is wishful thinking. It is illogical. That strategy will harm our national security. As former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said, "Throughout history, we see nations with allies thrive and nations without allies wither." If we want to win against our strategic competitors, it will take both a strong, fully resourced military, as well as strong alliances and partnerships. Let's be clear. One is not an alternative for the other. You got to have both.

So it is clear then that we need our allies. So how do we maintain this mutual relationship with robust defense spending of 3 to 5 percent real growth? That is what it calls for right here. This year, we should have a 3- to 5-percent increase, and the President's budget actually came out with a net decrease. That is why this whole thing is so important.

Just this morning, we had a hearing, and we had one of the authors of this book. I asked him the same question. I said: This was put together back in 2018. Is it still accurate today? He said: Yes, it is. And it doesn't even increase enough to keep up with inflation.

So Eric Edelman—he is one of the co-sponsors of the NDS that we are referring to here that has been our blueprint for 5 years now. The report said it best in an article this week by Eric Edelman. He said in this article:

[I]t remains a fact that allies and adversaries will see the U.S. commitment to defense as a crucial benchmark for assessing U.S. willingness and ability to succeed at long-term competition with its authoritarian adversaries.

He continued, and this is Eric Edelman:

A tough declaratory policy without adequate military means to reinforce it is a recipe for disaster, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

So I would just say this: President Biden walks the walk, but when it comes to supporting our allies, they don't do it, and I and many others know that it is meaningless without a strong defense budget to back it up.

And we need a higher topline. We need a higher topline. It is going to have to be somewhere in the range that was put together by a group of Democrats and Republicans that outlined what we have to do for America to survive. So we need a higher topline, and we are going to end up getting a higher topline.

With that, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:22 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 12, 2021, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate May 11, 2021:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CYNTHIA MINETTE MARTEN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ANDREA JOAN PALM, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.